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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 09/635,630 | 08/10/2000 | Kazuhiro Kusama | 566.38876X00 | 5841 |

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EXAMINER

GILLIGAN, CHRISTOPHER L

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| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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3626

DATE MAILED: 07/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/635,630

Applicant(s)

KUSAMA ET AL.

Examiner

Luke Gilligan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 8-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 8-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 4/28/04 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

2. In the amendment filed 4/28/04, the following has occurred: claims 1, 3, and 8-11 have been amended. Now, claims 1-6 and 8-11 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 6, 8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,918,209 in view of Okawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,933,810.

(A) As per claim 8, Campbell teaches a service reservation method that accepts requests from users for reservations utilizing services for utilizing services supplied by using resources (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25), comprising;

a) accepting service reservation booking requests from users (Campbell; col. 6, lines 42-50 and col. 8, lines 22-25);

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b) determining the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the accepted booking request in accordance with the preset specifications (Campbell; col. 7, line 27 to col. 8, line 2); and

c) denying the acceptance of the reservation request if the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the request is lower than a net revenue (i.e., predetermined standard), and accepting the reservation request if the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the request is not lower than the net revenue (i.e., predetermined standard), (Campbell; Figure 2B, col. 1, lines 15-25, col. 8, lines 20-40), during a period when the demand (81,85) (i.e., load level) is higher than a predetermined level (Campbell; Figures, 7A-7B, col. 1, lines 50-56).

d) wherein said resources include a transmission and exchange network adapted to supply transmission and exchange service to the users, and a data processing unit adapted to supply the users with information processing and accumulating services via said transmission and exchange network (see Figure 2A).

Campbell does not explicitly teach the degree of importance is determined in accordance with at least one of attributes of the users, status information of the services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services. Okawa teaches determining a degree of importance in accordance with at least one of attributes of users, status information of services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services (see column 5, line 60 – column 6, line 5 and Figure 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of reservation management to substitute this method of determining a degree of importance for a particular reservation request into the method of Campbell. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to substitute this technique for the purpose of improving efficiency by automatically making arrangements when duplicate reservations are received (see column 2, lines 1-9 of Okawa).

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(B) System claim 1 differs from claim 8, in that claim 8 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 1 contains features recited in a "means plus function" format. As the method of step claim 8 has been shown to be disclosed by the teachings of Campbell and Okawa, it is readily apparent that the "means" to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 1 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 8 and incorporated herein.

(C) As per claim 6, Campbell in view of Okawa teach the system supplies services according to the accepted reservation using a digital network that transmits information and reservations between users and the system (Campbell; Figures 2A-2B and col. 6, lines 10-60).

(D) Article of Manufacture claim 10 differs from claim 8, in that claim 8 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 10 contains features recited in a "means plus function" format. As the method of step claim 8 has been shown to be disclosed by the teachings of Campbell and Okawa, it is readily apparent that the "means" to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 10 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 8 and incorporated herein.

5. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,918,209 in view of Okawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,933,810 and further in view of Official Notice.

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(A) As per claim 2, Campbell in view of Okawa teach the system of claim 1 as described above. Campbell further teaches a service reservation system where the predetermined standard in which the marginal value (i.e., predetermined importance degree) is a function of, and increases linearly with, the demand curve (i.e., load level) (Campbell; Figure 11A and col. 11, line 22 to col. 13, line 21). It is unclear in Campbell whether the linear relationship of the demand curve to the marginal value is simple proportional relationship. However, it is common practice in the perishable goods industry to create a directly proportional relationship between demand (i.e., load level) and marginal value (i.e., importance degree) for the purposes of estimating materialization and revenue. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include a proportional relationship in the linear relationship of demand to marginal value of Campbell with the motivation of "maximizing profitability in the face of uncertain demand" (Campbell; col. 1, lines 24-25).

6. Claims 3-5, 9, 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell in view of Okawa as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Lynch et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,119,094.

(A) As per claim 9, Campbell teaches a service reservation taking method for receiving reservations from users for utilizing services supplied by using resources (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25), comprising:

- a) accepting service reservation booking requests from users (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25 and col. 6, lines 42-50);
- b) increasing the utilization efficiency of each reservation (Campbell; col. 1, lines 15-25)

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c) wherein said resources include a transmission and exchange network adapted to supply transmission and exchange service to the users, and a data processing unit adapted to supply the users with information processing and accumulating services via said transmission and exchange network (see Figure 2A). However, Campbell does not expressly disclose the preparation of a substitute reservation plan including altering the contents of the reservation in the request so that resource utilization efficiency of the request is increased. Nor does Campbell teach the presenting, accepting, or booking of the substitute plan as in items d, e, and f, respectively below. Lynch teaches preparing a substitute plan (16) in which the contents of the original request is altered (Lynch; Figure 1 and col. 3, lines 40-65).

d) presenting the substitute reservation plan to the user (Lynch; Figure 4, col. 8, lines 55-60);

e) accepting the user's selection of one of the substitute plans (Lynch; col. 8, lines 60-65); and

f) booking the substitute plan (Lynch; col. 8, lines 60-65).

It would have been obvious to include the substitute plan preparing, presenting, accepting and booking of Lynch in the efficiency seeking method of Campbell with the motivation of identifying "a plurality of alternate low-cost travel arrangements that may be offered or recommended to a customer submitting a travel request" (Lynch; col. 1, line 67 to col. 2, line 2).

Additionally, Campbell does not explicitly teach the degree of importance is determined in accordance with at least one of attributes of the users, status information of the services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services. Okawa teaches determining a degree of importance in accordance with at least one of attributes of users, status information of services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services (see

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column 5, line 60 – column 6, line 5 and Figure 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of reservation management to substitute this method of determining a degree of importance for a particular reservation request into the method of Campbell. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to substitute this technique for the purpose of improving efficiency by automatically making arrangements when duplicate reservations are received (see column 2, lines 1-9 of Okawa).

(B) Claim 3 differs from claim 9 in the recitation of “a reservation condition management element adapted to manage accepted reservation of services as reservation condition.” Campbell teaches a reservation system management element adapted to manage accepted reservations (Campbell; col. 8, lines 20-40 and col. 6, lines 10-55). The remainder of system claim 3 differs from claim 9, in that claim 9 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 3 contains features recited in a “means plus function” format. As the method of step claim B has been shown to be disclosed or obvious by the combined teachings of Campbell, Okawa, and Lynch it is readily apparent that the “means” to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 3 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 9 and incorporated herein.

(C) As per claims 4-5, Campbell in view of Okawa and Lynch teach the system of claim 3 as described above. Campbell further teaches the denial and allowance of the accepted reservation and the increase of resource utilization efficiency of the requested reservation (Campbell; Figure 2B and col. 1, lines 15-25). However, Campbell fails to teach a substitute plan preparation element that prepares a substitute reservation by altering the contents of the reservation request. Lynch teaches preparing a substitute plan (16) in which the contents of the

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original request is altered (Lynch; Figure 1 and col. 3, lines 40-65). It would have been obvious to include the substitute plan preparing, presenting, accepting and booking of Lynch in the efficiency seeking method of Campbell with the motivation of identifying "a plurality of alternate low-cost travel arrangements that may be offered or recommended to a customer submitting a travel request" (Lynch; col. 1, line 67 to col. 2, line 2).

(D) Article of Manufacture claim 11 differs from claim 9, in that claim 9 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 11 contains features recited in a "means plus function" format. As the method of step claim 9 has been shown to be disclosed or obvious by the combined teachings of Campbell, Okawa, and Lynch, it is readily apparent that the "means" to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 11 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 9 and incorporated herein.

Response to Arguments

7. In the remarks filed 4/28/04, Applicants incorporate the Arguments filed 6/9/03 and 01/28/04. In addition, Applicants argue that the Examiner has failed to support the traversed Official Notice by producing a reference.

8. In response to Applicants' arguments, the Examiner incorporates the responses to these arguments in Office Actions mailed 08/28/03 and 03/03/04. In addition, with respect to the newly added limitations, the previously filed remarks are now moot in view of the new grounds of rejection detailed above. In particular the Examiner has relied upon the teachings of Okawa which describes a reservation management system for making arrangements in accordance

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with degrees of importance of the reservations. These new grounds of rejection are detailed above.


9. Furthermore, with respect to the traversed Official Notice, the Examiner respectfully draws Applicants' attention to the Final Rejection mailed 08/28/03. In particular paragraph 16 discloses a reference in support of the Official Notice. Therefore, this argument is not found to be persuasive.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Luke Gilligan whose telephone number is (703) 308-6104. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8am-5:30pm.

11. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas can be reached on (703) 305-9588. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

12. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


CLG
07/07/04


ALEXANDER KALINOWSKI
PRIMARY EXAMINER

per 3626